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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

A Busy God

(By John Young.)

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without you: Father..... But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—
MATTHEW x. 29, 30.

Whilst the Lord was busy watching cheeky sparrows, small and big,
Softly chirping feathered gossip as they hopped from twig to twig,
Whilst he watched them with attention, listening to their voices sweet,
He ignored the fact that Smithers died of having naught to eat.
Said the Lord, " 'Twas rough on Smithers,
But the poor are always with us,
And their prayers are most annoying—they're a nuisance, one and all;
When I'm gazing on my birdies
None of their petitions heard is:
I must watch my darling dickies lest they topple o'er and fall."

Whilst the Lord was busy counting every hair on Tommy's pate
(Why he sought to know the number heavenly records do not state),
He was told that certain creatures, worshippers of Christ on earth,
Were despatching one another—yea, for all that they were worth.
Said the Lord, "I really oughter

Stop this saigninary slaughter,
For I know the gentle Christian when he starts a-seeing red:
It behooves me, then, to mention
That I'll give my best attention
To the matter when I've counted all the hairs on every head.

When my 'worms' have all abandoned every trace of thatch on top,
When the sparrows need no 'Father' to attend them on the hop,
Then I'll see all wrongs are righted, then I'll conquer death and hell.
Now possess your souls in patience.....I am Yahveh! All is well!"
Said the people, "Wily Father,
We have heard thee, and we'd rather
Have a grain of good at present than a ton when ends thy task.
We your Godship hate to worry,
But, you see, we're in a hurry—
No more yarus of what you will do; deeds, not words, are what we ask!"
London Freethinker.

The High Court of Reason or, The Justice Shop of Faith

**Faith is But a Charnel House and Spells Mental Stagnation—
Reason the Only Dependable Guide to Ultimate Truth.**

(By J. Atwood Culbertson.)

Faith, as applied to religion, is a corrupt Justice Shop which rules that all the tenets of religion are true—infalible. The rulings of this Justice Shop, to its adherents, are final, and to protest against a ruling is contempt (heresy). It is a contaminating agency that breeds mental slavery. It means the acceptance of a doctrine without investigation, thought or research, a total submission to the dictates of masters. Faith is the archenemy of Truth which dethrones Reason, without explanation or apology, and enthrones superstition instead. It is the crumbling rock upon which Christianity stands, slowly but surely disappearing before the vigorous onslaughts of Reason. It is a mental malady that causes persons to become deaf, dumb and blind while ambassadors of an imaginary supreme being relieve them of their money. Faith is encircled with flaming swords standing guard over the "controlling" supernatural powers born of man's fears and hopes, and, protected by its resources, a small fraction of these forces have thus far managed to keep alive. Faith spells mental stagnation; its command is "Lose thy reason." Submission is the best sign of piety. Faith wants no proofs and asks for none. Believe your brothers to be devils and your mothers witches, back up the belief with a sufficient amount of Faith and they will be devils and witches. With Faith enough you can produce any number of gods, devils, heavens and hells, as well as a few ghosts, holy and otherwise, that will be as "self-evident" as are the present editions issued by the Christian Faith.

Reason is the High Court of Courts to which man may appeal from any ruling of any other Court, examine and weigh the evidence in an impartial manner, and decide in accordance therewith. Reason means the act of attempting to arrive or arriving at a conclusion by the use of the mind; that is, by proof, examination, argument and discussion.

The Justice Shop of Faith and the High Court of Reason are eternally at war with each other, and the person who dares not appeal from the questionable rulings of Faith are mental serfs, forever barricaded from gaining an acquaintance with Truth. Reason is polish; Faith is rust, a rust that clogs. It is folly to say that one can arrive at Truth by stopping the machinery of the mind. Reason is a cleansing agency which renovates the mind of the inheritance of nursed and accumulated fears and superstitions of centuries, leaving the shining Trinity of Love, Hope and Truth.

It was never the unprejudiced High Court of Reason that declared the Christian bible the inspired word of a supreme being. It was the domineering Justice Shop of Faith. As long as men submit to the rulings of Faith alone they are underlings. But once let them rise to the dignified height of bravery to appeal to the High Court of Reason, they will no longer drink up, without question, the admonishments of the professionally good men to be god-fearing lest they be eternally damned. They will learn to know that we have had enough of Faith and that Reason must be her conqueror. For over

1600 years Christian Faith held the reins of government protected by the murderous sword, which was worked unceasingly, and in the name of Faith all the hideous cruelties on the criminal calendar have been practiced.

Faith burned Servetus, Joan of Arc and Bruno, and persecuted Galileo. Faith prosecuted the search for New England "witches," and sent hundreds of women to their death, and though that Faith still lives, somewhat impaired, it has never apologized for its errors. Faith has ever been the stumbling block in front of Truth, while Reason has prosecuted the campaign against the crimes of Faith, stood for individual liberty of the mind and soul, and defiantly flaunted the flag of justice in the face of the overwhelming opposing forces of the pions.

Apologists do not wash Christianity clean of the gore of innocence which is upon her bloody hands by saying that the wrongs committed in upholding the supremacy of Faith are due to the ignorance of the times. Why are not the ruling powers, the "men of Christ," who are so pleased to advertise themselves as "called by God to preach the truth," above the ignorance of the erratic mass? If god's own ambassadors are susceptible to the same errors as the lay people, wherein is the advantage of being "called by God," receiving divine revelation and commanding with the all? If it be now admitted that the wrongs committed against unbelievers and non-Christians in the past were not in accord with our present conception of right, and god permitted his children to practice murder and torture in his name without stopping them, were not those Christian children and the god they worshipped morally below the men and women murdered and tortured? If Christians were at any time morally inferior to the unbeliever and non-Christian, when did they rise to be morally superior to the unbeliever and non-Christian, and therefore entitled to special recognition from the god that was an accessory to their cruelties?

In that impossible combination of holy phantom subjects known as the Trinity, god is made to say:

"I am My Son; My Son is I,

We are the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost is we,
My Son is My Father; My Father is I."

The High Court of Reason would never give a decision declaring such an impossible combination to be a fact. Only the corrupt Justice Shop of Faith would rule upholding the "truth" of such a conglomeration of gods.

Faith is unquestionably on the decline. More people are questioning today than ever in the history of Christendom. They are saying:

"If there is a God?"

If there is a hell?

If there is a devil?

If there is a heaven?"

All of which goes to express their serious doubts of the existence of any of these Faith-made things. People are commencing to realize that gods have always been superabundant. They realize that the assertion that the Christian god is the "Only true and living God," is mere verbiage, and that Faith utterances of a like nature are being repeated by followers of other gods.

Let us look at that instrument of Faith known as the Apostles' Creed. Let us give it a test of Reason. In this creed we find it stated that Jesus descended into hell and later ascended into heaven. If he descended he naturally had to go downward (inward), and if he ascended he had to go skyward. Therefore, if Jesus descended into hell he must have gone farther into the earth. The Christians have not shown that hell is a part of the earth's interior, as is implied in the Apostles' Creed, and no man who uses Reason as his guide has ever come to such a conclusion. If the Christian hell is at some remote place from earth or a part of the earth's interior, did Jesus reach it by descent? Faith and creed say he did; Reason says he did not.

Reason is the only dependable guide to direct us to the truth. Faith has been tried and failed miserably, even with the support of kings, sword and statute. Reason has fought along and has made an estimable showing. Only during the last term of the Pennsylvania Legislature was a bill passed putting the Agnostic on an equal footing with the Christian with respect to giving testimony in Court. And here it is well to note that these Christian legislators, who for years have looked upon Agnostics and Freethinkers as a set of liars, recognizing the inadequacy of their divine law and the avenue of escape it furnishes by offering absolution to the repentant evil-doer, have enacted laws making perjury a crime in order to punish the god believers who have no hesitancy in taking an oath, yet are ready to lie for the purpose of defeating justice. Finally Reason has convinced some of the Faith legislators that willingness and ability to tell the truth is not dependent upon one's belief or disbelief in the supernatural. Gradually Reason overcomes her foes, not by sword, cannon, Inquisition, (Holy Office), or torch, but by perseverance and education.

Faith propagators point to China and Japan and ask us to look at what Faith has done for those countries. Is the awakening of China and Japan due to the inculcation of Christian principles? Or is it due to the injection of the Western spirit of activity into their lives? Or the education which many of the Orientals have received in Western Universities during the past half century? the benefits of which the less fortunate receive by imitating their Western educated brothers. What did Faith do on its first attempt to gain recognition in Japan when Faith alone was the importation? When it left none of its trickery, persecution and domineering methods behind? It is generally admitted that the Oriental are a passive people, who have been satisfied with little. The American missionary goes there importing with him the same methods he used with success in this country to gather money to finance his soul-saving expedition. Some of the people with whom he comes in contact absorb the spirit of activity which he practices, and go at matters differently. This change of manners of the native the missionary tells him is due to his having been converted to Christianity. Who would accuse Rockefeller, Carnegie, Harriman or Morgan of being successful on account of their Christian Faith or lack of it? Was it Christianity that aided idolatrous Japan to whip Christian Russia? Was it a Christian god that allowed the soldiers of these two nations to butcher each other on the battle-fields of war? Did a Christian god enrage the soldiery of these two nations to clash? Could he have averted this war? Reason tells us that gods were missing in this instance, as in all others where they could make themselves useful and reveal their powers. It is not Faith that is changing the Mongolian, but it is his awakening to the Western spirit of competition, and his getting in touch with the outside world. The Christian missionary does not forget to import Western progression, customs and habits as well as Christian Faith.

The Faith can no longer resort to the torch, thumb-screw and rack and dungeon. The lash can no longer be used as argu-

ment, and the frightful word pictures of an eternal torment in a hell of fire and brimstone no longer arouses the fears of the "straying." All the old means of whipping the masses into line have of necessity been discarded. To cope with the situation and keep alive the interest, as well as keep the membership books well filled, the "men of God" have adopted the novel. The up-to-date sky-pilot no longer exhorts his people to pour forth continuous streams of hallelujahs, amens, and God-bless-you-brothers. He introduces the novel, forms a boys' brigade, a boys' choir, a girls' choir, has a moving picture show, advertises widely the new soloist, has converted Chinamen, and missionaries from the firing line of the Russo-Japanese war lecture, gives special sermons for the benefit of a lodge of a secret order and invites the lodge to attend in a body, and questions women respecting their ideal of a husband. Introduce a little of the vaudeville and the crowd comes a stream. The Catholics' largest audience is at the Spring event of "Crowning the May Queen," and all the "sweet things" fight for the "honor" of being "Queen."

The boys' brigade is a novel way of getting the young hopefuls within the influence of the church. The heart of most boys of sixteen summers or so beats longingly for the spectator, and no better inducement could be offered him to gain his support of the Faith than to offer him a sword and a suit of khaki. With sword dangling at his side and leggings about his calves his dreams are realized, and to perpetuate his "importance" he will readily submit without question to any creed or discipline. No one understands better than the preacher that possession is nine tenths of the law; that people are slow to break away from the old and accept the new. Barn a child's mind with the tares of superstition and it will always be under subjection, but fertilize the unscarred mind with the ripe fruits of Reason and its works will find immortal recognition in the minds of all posterity.

Every god believer wants to hear the converted Chinaman tell about the idolatry of his father and what Jesus has done for him (the convert). They go and listen for one hour, always to hear the "chink" conclude with an appeal for money to "aid the poor self-sacrificing missionaries who are doing such a noble work in the fields of idolatry, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, and awakening a love for the only true and living God." Going to a church and listening to a converted Chinaman, preachers and underlings tell of what Jesus has done for them, reminds one of reading medicine testimonials. They tell you they tried everything else, but nothing helped them so much as their fear of God and the love of Jesus. Likewise, a man of one hundred years is asked by an agent of Duffy's whiskey to what he attributes his old age, and he says, "Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey." The patent medicine man asks the same question and he answers, "Perama." The sky-pilot comes along and makes the same inquiry and hears, "Brother Bash it is nothing but the love of Jesus." Faith calls him a Christian; Reason says he is a hypocrite.

For five days in the week Reason teaches the pupil in the public school that the indestructibility of matter is a fact and that the nebular theory is tenable. On Sunday the same child goes to the Faith school and has all the good it has acquired during the week destroyed by the Faith teacher teaching the opposite, and to doubt the Faith teacher is a "sin."

Do we want the High Court of Reason or the Justice Shop of Faith? Reason, of course. Why? Because Reason finds that Faith is the vehicle which carries man into mental night instead of its promised realm of eternal joy. And only by being guided by Reason can a man remain free.

Sewickley, Penn.

Another Freethought Funeral

Beautiful Tribute Paid to a Departed Free-thinker at St. Charles, Minn.

(By B. Peabody.)

Recently we buried a life-long free-thinker; one of the early settlers, being the first settler in the town of Dover, and the third in the county of Olmsted. Following is the address read at the funeral by the writer, held under the trees in his front yard. He requested that there should be no singing and no flowers. A sheaf of ripened wheat rested on the coffin which was very appropriate.

The Address.

Again we are brought face to face with that mystery which man calls death. But however mysterious it may seem, and by some said to be an unnatural thing, I believe it is just as natural as anything under the sun. It is as natural to die as it is to live; just as natural as we are born; and although the many have denied this, it has been recognized and advocated by all the greatest and most learned of the past ages. But life concerns us more than death. It is life we sympathize with, the throbbing, the moving things of the universe; not the dead, the silent, the motionless. It is the joy of life our hearts call for, and yet we all know that the day must end, the word must grow cold that the clasp must loosen, and the red tide of life must freeze in the veins.

Our dead brother lying here, lived a long and useful life. He was an absolutely honest man; a man who always kept his word, fulfilled all his contracts and never tried to overreach his neighbor in any of the affairs of life. He was true to his ideal; true to his thought, and what his brain conceived his lips expressed. The first winter in the West he took a job of chopping wood in Wisconsin. He built a shanty in the woods and boarded himself. The only reading matter he had was a bible his mother gave him when he left home. He read it a great deal, and has always kept a copy lying on the table in his sitting room.

He had gathered quite a library of books together but I think the bible was referred to, oftener than any other book. He carried much of it in his head, and could repeat more of it than any one I have ever met. He soon came to the conclusion that there was more evil than good in it, and that instead of being written or dictated by infinite wisdom, it was written by ignorant, fallible men.

Leonard Knapp was born in Lewis county, N. Y., Feb. 17, 1825. He came West at the age of 23. Located in Dodge county, Wis., where he remained until the spring of 1854, when he came to Olmsted county, Minn., locating on section 26, Dover Township. He was married in April, 1854, to Miss Sarah Thompson a native of New York State, and who died in 1864. His children were Pete, Kate and Wright. Kate and Wright are still living. He was again married in 1867 to Lucretia Harris who died in 1880. Geo. L. is the only child of this marriage. Married again to Martha Y. Waterman who still survives. He was the second in a family of eleven children, four of whom, two boys and two girls, are still living.

He leaves to mourn his loss, his wife, three children, Kate, Wright and Geo. L., two grandchildren, also two brothers and two sisters.

When the spring-time touch is lightest,
When the summer-eyes are brightest,
Or the Autumn sings most drear;
When the winter's hair is whitest,
Sleep, old pioneer!
Safe beneath the sheltering soil,
Late enough you crept;
You were weary of the toil
Long before you slept.
Well you paid for every blessing,
Bought with grief each day of cheer:

Nature's arms around you pressing,
Nature's lips your brow caressing,
Sleep, old pioneer!
When the hill of toil was steepest,
When the forest frown was deepest,
Poor, but young, you hastened here;
Came where solid hope was cheapest—
Came—a pioneer.
Made the Western jungles view
Civilization's charms;
Snatched a home for yours and you,
Among these prairie farms.
Toil had never cause to doubt you—
Progress' path you helped to clear;
But today forgets about you,
And the world rides on without you—
Sleep, old pioneer!

Careless crowds go daily past you,
Where their future fate has cast you,
Leaving not a sigh or tear;
And your wonder-works outlast you—
Brave old pioneer!
Little care the selfish throng
Where your heart is hid,
Though they thrive upon the strong,
Resolute work it did,
But our memory eyes have found you,
And we hold you grandly dear:
With no work-day woes to wound you—
With the peace of man around you—
Sleep, old pioneer!

At the Grave.

With morn, with noon, with night, with changing clouds and changeless stars, with grass, with tears and birds, with leaf and bud, with flower and blossoming vine, with all the sweet influences of Nature, we leave our dead. Again farewell.

Persistence of Superstition

Discussion of Sunday Laws and Their Influence Upon the Race—Other Laws Enacted by the Devotees of Orthodox Faith.

(By Dr. T. J. Bowles.)

The dead past still molds, in a large degree, the thought of the living present. Heredity, tradition and vested interests are powerful obstacles to overcome, and through these forces many of the customs, faiths and institutions of the savage and barbarous peoples of early ages have come down to us and seriously poisoned the stream of modern life.

In all civilized countries a large number of good men and good women are now at work to rid the world of barbarisms, stupidities and superstitions that have been

transmitted to us through the operation of these powerful laws of inheritance.

With a profound sense of my responsibility to my fellowmen, and with an ardent desire to aid in the good work of rescuing some of my countrymen from the galling bondage of superstition, I shall continue this series of articles until every rag and fig-leaf is removed from this hideous monster, and expose it to the horrified gaze of the many thousand readers of these pages.

The awful horrors and terrors of unnumbered millions of the human race that are now being tortured in the flames of an endless hell, as described by Dante and Jonathan Edwards, I would have each of you know, do not exceed the agonies and sorrows and sufferings that have been inflicted by the bloody hands of superstition.

on billions of your fellowmen while living on this beautiful earth.

With my feeble powers of description I have endeavored to impress upon your minds a faint idea of the diabolical and hellish history of superstition, but language is utterly inadequate to describe its infinite horrors, and I ask every reader of these pages to multiply what I say a thousand fold, and even then it would be impossible to approximate the awful tortures and miseries and agonies that have been inflicted on innocent men, women and children by this bloody monster.

Go with me to New England, the cradle of culture, and a high type of manhood and womanhood, and only a little while ago the stupid superstition that Sunday was a Holy day was so firmly fixed in the public mind that a law was passed forbidding, under heavy penalty, any mother from kissing her darling babe on Sunday, and thousands of loving fathers and mothers literally wore their lives away at hard labor for violating this infamous statute passed by the priests of superstition.

I would also have you remember that this savage statute passed and enforced by heartless fiends would still be in full force today all over our blessed country had it not been for the angel of Science and the Goddess of Reason.

Another statute passed by the devotees of the superstition that Sunday is a Holy day forbid, under heavy penalty, any citizen from walking or riding on Sunday except to and from church, and thousands were kept impoverished all the days of their lives for violating this statute.

No human tongue can describe the unspeakable sorrows and sufferings that were visited on good women for kissing their babes on Sunday, and thousands of industrious fathers were kept in abject poverty all the days of their miserable and wretched lives by the payment of heavy fines for being caught in their barn-yards and gardens on Sunday.

A statute providing heavy penalties on every citizen for failing to attend public worship on Sunday kept the houses of correction constantly filled to overflowing, for in default of payment of the heavy fines imposed they were compelled to work out their fines, and thousands of little children were at all times exposed to the dreadful horrors of starvation, whose fathers and mothers had been arrested and committed to the workhouse for non-attendance at church on Sunday.

This idiotic superstition that Sunday is a Holy day still prevails in a modified form, and on this account every good man and every good woman should treat Sunday as a holiday instead of a Holyday, and indulge in all kinds of innocent games, sports and amusements; visiting friends, exer-

sions to the woods and lakes, picnics, concerts, theatres, museums and every species of pleasure and recreation should be freely indulged for the purpose of stamping out and exposing the idiotic practice of wearing long faces and fasting in deference to the superstition that Sunday is a Holyday, and that God will be angry if his children have any pleasure on this Holyday.

Persons not familiar with the history of superstition will be astonished to learn that not long ago in the New England states a statute, with heavy penalties, was enacted forbidding any citizen to appear at the polls and offer to vote for any candidate for office if the voter was unconverted and not a member in good standing in the church, and this same statute provided for the disfranchisement of any citizen who cast his ballot for an unconverted man.

Another statute provided that if any citizen joined the Quaker church he should be banished, and if he ever returned he should be put to death, and many noble men and grand women were victims of this infamous law.

There are many evil influences in the world that are calculated to degrade and debase the human mind, but superstition is the most demoralizing agency that ever escaped from Pandora's box—it completely destroys every noble and generous impulse, and converts the heart into a desert waste filled with the serpents of hate and cruelty.

Superstition enacted laws in New England forbidding under dreadful penalties any citizen to cook a meal, make a bed, sweep a house, walk in a garden or in a barnyard on Sunday, and superstition enacted a law in New England making it a duty of all constables and sheriffs to arrest every one suspected of being a Quaker, and if found guilty to be publicly whipped with knotted thongs, after which their tongues were to be bored through with a red-hot iron, and hundreds died in agony while undergoing these savage tortures.

Persecuting, defaming, torturing and assassinating men, women and children has been the devilish pastime of superstition in all ages of the world down to this very hour.

Superstition in New England made it the duty by law of every policeman, and the whole constabulary were required, to arrest every man and woman who was caught in the act of writing a letter to a friend on Sunday, and in default of payment of excessive fines they were committed to the workhouse.

For failing to be prompt in their attendance at church hundreds were publicly whipped with knotted leather thongs on their naked bodies, and for criticizing ministers of the gospel and speaking disrespectfully of the church many were branded

with a red hot iron on the forehead and had their ears cut off.

It is therefore within the limit of sober truth when I saw that the tortures and horrors of the lost souls in hell, as described by Dante and Johnathan Edwards are no greater than the agonies endured by men, women and children in the flesh, while living on this earth inflicted by the heartless fiends of superstition; the horrible death of Jesus Christ on the cross was merciful in the highest degree when compared to the unspeakable and savage tortures of many millions of grand men, noble women and innocent children who have perished in the slimy coils of the venomous serpents and wild beasts of superstition.

It staggers the imagination and well nigh passes all human belief that only a little while ago the prisons of New England at Salem, Ipswich, Boston and Cambridge were literally overflowing with innocent men, women and children awaiting their turn to be brutally tortured and put to death by the most savage methods because they had been convicted of the imaginary crime of witchcraft; and I want every reader of these pages to know that if it had not been for the angel of Science and Goddess of Reason the whole of the United States today would be a swimming Golgotha of blood and under the absolute control of the heartless priests of superstition.

In the present age of intelligence and science, free thought and rationalism, it would seem that no danger need be feared of a return of those awful superstitions, but when we remember that there are still hundreds of ignorant people in the United States who believe that God had a son by a woman, and ignorantly killed him, it is only a short step to a belief in the hideous superstition of sorcery and witchcraft, and every good man and every good woman should labor without ceasing to extirpate, root and branch, this deadly Upas tree that still exhales its poisonous effluvia and fills the social organism with vice and crime.

How long! O how long! Will it yet be before mankind will learn that the only saviors of the human race are the angel of Science and the Goddess of Reason? How long! O how long! will it yet be before mankind will learn that the beautiful and fragrant flower of pure religion can never bloom in the human heart until the wild beasts of superstition are driven from the human brain?

Muncie, Ind.

Takes Housman's Book.

NEW YORK CITY.—Enclosed find money order for the 5 copies of the Blade you sent me some time ago and a part payment on Dr. Housman's book.—MARK C. HOUSMAN.

MAN'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY

CORRUPTION IN CIVIL GOVERNMENT—FAULTS OF PRESENT SYSTEM—EXPERIENCE AS WITNESS IN MURDER TRIAL—THE DOCTOR AND THE LAWYER.

(By Dr. A. Hausman.)

Our governmental machine is one of the most complicated and ineffective in the world, it has too many wheels and costs too much to run. There is too much particularism in the legislative power of the single states, which is of no advantage to the people but only to those to whom this arrangement affords an opportunity to make a comfortable living without much physical or mental exertion. Why, for instance, should a state like Rhode Island or Delaware have separate criminal and civil laws, while Texas, which is many times as large as both taken together, has only one law? Why can not these laws be the same all over the United States, are not the laws of society the same everywhere? This would be an immense saving for the people, who have to pay enormous sums on account of complications arising from differences in the laws between the states or collision with the constitution. Why must the extradition of a criminal require the intervention of the governor when it is of general interest to effect the apprehension and punishment of a criminal with as little delay as possible? Why must the marriage and divorce laws be so confused and stupid that a persons marriage may be legal in one and void in another state? How much money is wasted for useless or injurious legislation, when it would be much cheaper and sensible to have the laws framed by a few competent persons and afterwards submitted to the people for approval. In Germany the people felt relieved when the smaller states lost their independence and union was restored in all the important departments of government, while here every little state clings to the vain prerogative of having its own laws at a great expense.

Why is it that this great free nation has a government so corrupt and dishonest that "to be a politician" is considered a detracting epithet, suggestive of a disreputable character, while in Europe such an office is held to be a trust of honor. Is the general moral standard lower here than in Europe? Originally perhaps not, but the obnoxious system tends to make the officers dishonest, to blunt the sense of honor and diminish the regard for the rights of the people. In Europe the state demands certain qualifications for an office and gives certain guarantees in return, permanency of position and a chance for promotion. Egoism is the only natural motive for any individual act and it is in obedience to this impulse that the officers are honest, it is their interest to be so. But here it is different. Qualification is not required and the appointment to a certain office is made a political issue, although

the duties to be discharged have no reference whatever to the pending questions of partisanship. There is no reward for the faithful performance of duties, an officer who has conscientiously devoted his time and energy to the interest of the people, is just as liable to be removed from office as the one who has availed himself of the opportunity and feathered his own nest at the expense of the public. And what is still worse, the thief who has stolen a fortune, when retiring to private life will be respected as a prominent citizen, while the honest man, who goes out of office with clean hands and empty pockets is looked at with disrespect, as a fool who was not smart enough to make hay while the sun shone. Why do the people expect a man to go through all the indignities of an election, run the gauntlet of vilification by the papers, pretending to be the mouthpiece of public opinion. How can the people expect that anybody should be fool enough to sacrifice his personal interest for that of the public, for which there is neither any necessity nor obligation. If the people want honest service they can have it as well as private persons and under the same conditions. But as long as they maintain this foolish system, the result must be that honest men are to a great extent debarred from public offices and the dishonest individuals secure as much as possible of the peoples money, the only remuneration worth having. Public opinion as an entity does not exist, the man who has the peoples money does not care a straw what Tom, Dick and Harry think of him, he has the power, the real value.

Far worse than the departments of the United States, corruption infests the state, county and municipal governments and the free people stand powerless while they are being robbed systematically. This is the natural sequence of disregarding the principle of honesty, thieves are the fittest to survive among a nation that does not recognize and encourage honesty. Through the fault of the system, individuals who could hardly make an honest living by labor, are enabled to appropriate millions, which means a corresponding loss to those who have to pay. But it means more. A person acquiring a large fortune illegitimately, without giving an equivalent in return, obtains through this money control over a large share of the land, he can buy thousands of acres and hold them on speculation. This is one of the causes of land monopoly against which Mr. George might have justly directed his attack, because it is within the scope of possibility to abolish it to some extent, while it is impossible to undo the accomplished fact and overthrow the system of land-property, which has always been and will be forever the basis of society.

Comparing the efficiency of our civil government with that of the most advanced states of Europe (irrespective of standing armies and hereditary monarchies), we can not

deny the disagreeable fact that they are governed better and cheaper than we are.

Large cities and communities have as a rule considerable property, either in cash funds or in real estate, forests, commons, etc., from which they derive considerable income, while here almost every town is overburdened with debt, contracted by dishonest officers. Here in Leadville, for instance, so much money has been stolen that property is taxed 7 per cent of its value and the schools are often closed for months, because there is no money to pay the teachers. But don't we enjoy the great privilege of free speech? Oh yes, we can call every body a thief, etc., behind his back, he does not care, he has our money, enjoys the fruit of our labor and the people be d—d; and he is right.

If we pay dearly enough for being badly governed, the administration of justice is a downright shame, a mockery of liberty. When I came over from the land of the "down trodden nations," it was with a feeling of awe, akin to veneration, that I put my foot on the sacred soil of liberty. Here was the land of the free, where all people are equal before the law, personal rights held sacred, honest labor recognized, officers models of integrity, imbued with patriotic fervor to serve the interest of their country, etc. But this beautiful dream was soon dispelled when I became a witness in a murder case. When the trial opened and the examination of witnesses commenced, I was surprised. Heretofore I had looked at every free citizen as a king, proudly asserting his right against any one in the state, no matter how high his position, but as soon as he sat down on the witness chair his dignity was gone. How meek and humble he submitted to all the abuse and insults the lawyers hurled at him, evidently astonished at his own iniquity of which he was unaware before. Since then I have had the misfortune to become better acquainted with the courts and, true to the proverb, this greater familiarity has only bred contempt.

On the top of court houses we see frequently a female figure, blindfolded with a pair of scales in one hand and a sword in the other hand, the goddess of justice. Indeed a fit emblem of justice, blind, unable to distinguish right and wrong, a harlot, who bestows her favors upon the one who places the greatest weight of gold in her scales. What prostitution is physically, that is the profession of law mentally, it has lost all sense of shame and decency, all perception of wrong and right, all interest in the welfare of the community. Its object is not to protect the life of the weaker against the stronger, to guarantee the industrious laborer the enjoyment of the fruit of his exertion, to guard the common wealth against the depredation of organized bands of robbers, etc., no, the sole object is to afford a large number of individuals an opportunity to receive for their personal labor an undue proportion of the material wealth of the community, a corresponding amount of money. There is no other class of professional people (except artists) who

receive such enormous fees for personal services than the lawyers, because their work is not estimated like the work of others by the time required, but by the amount of value in litigation. Measured by this scale, the services of a physician, when a life is at stake ought to command the highest price, but in this case the people would never submit to extortion, and unreasonable demands could not be collected. But in the case of the lawyer they submit because they must, the letter of the law gives him the right and the executive force, that is the persons paid for carrying out the orders of the court, gives him the power. Thus the lawyers receive such enormous fees for their services, because they have the opportunity and the courage to take them and the people are powerless, because they are too ignorant and cowardly to abolish this extortion.

Now let us illustrate by an example how the law works in the interest of the people, as is claimed by some fools (those that pay) and some smart men (those that receive).

In the Denver Republican of Dec. 11, 1892, we find the following:

THE MILLINGTONS.

ATTORNEY THOMAS ATTACHES THEIR PROPERTY FOR UNPAID SERVICES.

"The trial of the celebrated case of the state against Frank Millington, Mary and Dilly Millington, charged with the murder of William Avery of Fort Collins some two years ago, is recalled by an attachment suit filed yesterday in the district court by Attorney Chas. S. Thomas against Frank and Mary E. Millington. The suit is for \$20,154.33 and is brought on sundry promissory notes made to Mr. Thomas individually and to Thos. M. Patterson and Chas. S. Thomas jointly, the latter having been assigned to the plaintiff in the case.

"The bill does not state for what consideration the notes were made, but as Messrs. Patterson and Thomas were the attorneys of the Millingtons in the lengthy trial in which their life and liberties hung in the balance, the inference is that the notes were given in consideration of services rendered at the trial, in which the accused were acquitted."

Supposing this to be true, what does it signify? In the first place, if a crime has been committed the law could not protect the victim and can not make the deed undone. Consequently there remains no other duty for the law but to find the guilty party and punish them as a warning example for others that may have murderous propensities. In regard to the suspected persons there are two possibilities and only two, they are guilty or they are not. In the first case it shows that it was merely a matter of money whether a guilty criminal be convicted or acquitted, in the second it proves that innocence can not expect a fair trial in court. But in both cases it shows that the laws and

(Continued on Page 12.)

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HIGHER CRITICS AND THE CLERGY.

"If a man believes in the teachings of destructive higher critics he has no place in an evangelical pulpit. He had best go fishing instead of preaching." Rev. Dr. Thomas, Cincinnati, Ohio.

From the very inception of Christianity until the present time, its advocates have been unwilling to subject the system to the supreme test of criticism. If the Christian religion is of divine origin, as claimed, it ought to be able to stand any critical test, the only fair method that can be applied in the search for truth. Religious prejudice, such as we observe from the quotation given above, is invariably the result of early training. This form of prejudice has led to every religious persecution, and cruelties innumerable and destructive have followed in its wake. And of what is the higher criticism? Can it destroy truth? Does it alter or change a proven fact? Truth and fact court criticism and demand the fullest investigation, for the more severely critical the inquiry, the more complete the investigation, the more potent do truth and fact become.

The real alarm of Dr. Thomas comes from the fact that the higher criticism is destructive only of his religious fantasy. The higher critics have penetrated the dark corners of theology, they have explored the realm of the supposed miraculous and exposed the vagaries of the different theological systems. They have carefully weighed the evi-

dence for and against the doctrines promulgated by the church, and have found a preponderance to be antagonistic thereto. With the moral courage of their convictions, the higher critics have not hesitated to make known the results of their labors, and this publicity is the one crime, for which men like Dr. Thomas, would condemn them. The higher critic believes in calling a spade by its proper name, but Dr. Thomas would resort to subterfuge in order to conceal a truth that the members of his congregation may be kept from a knowledge of that truth. The higher critic is naturally heterodox. Dr. Thomas and his conditors are naturally orthodox. Herein lies the real difference. But higher criticism will continue to labor and orthodoxy is bound to suffer as a result.

The last sentence in the statement quoted is aptly put. The higher critic has no place in any pulpit. To occupy a pulpit would be to stultify the criticism. As a higher critic, a man knows that the pulpit is wrong; that it is out of joint with the times; that it has become fossilized, and with such a knowledge, he would not want to occupy it. Only they who keep a sharp eye upon a business contract, looking to the cash extremity of a church-pulpit bargain, would desire a place in the pulpit that he may be richly paid for the making of promises he can never fulfil.

In our judgment the world would have been happier by far, and fully one thousand years in advance of where it is today, if every Christian preacher, from the first century to the twentieth, had gone fishing for fish instead of fishing for cash. Could they have angled patiently and long for the finny inhabitants of the deep, and made less claims to an assumed divine authority and power, which they knew they never possessed, much suffering, pain and agony would have been saved to millions of men and women. If there be "sneakers" among the race whogulp at the wily parson's bait, they should not ask all mankind to sniffer because they have been foolish enough to get caught.

B. S. U. CONVENTION.

President George O. Roberts, of the Buckeye Secular Union, writes the Blade that he has completed arrangements for the coming annual Convention, which, briefly summarized, the details may be given as follows:

The Convention will be held at Columbus, Ohio, on Sunday, September 12, next.

The place of meeting will be at Schenck's Hall, a large and commodious assembly room, located at 335 South High Street.

Headquarters, for members and visitors, have been secured at the American Hotel, No. 20 North State Street, which is but three squares from the Convention Hall.

The hotel is run on the American plan, with special rates of \$1.50 per day for single rooms, two occupying one room, \$1.00 per day. President Roberts writes that the "hotel is O. K. and set a good table."

Three sessions are being arranged for, morning, afternoon and night, but the program is yet in course of preparation.

As quite a number of Freethinkers live in and near Columbus, and this being one of the most central points in the State, being accessible from all parts, with a two-cent fare, the Convention ought to be made a history-making affair, and an improvement even, upon the splendid gathering at Canal Dover last year.

For any further information, write to Geo. O. Roberts, Dennison, Ohio, or to Lou Lawrence, Barnesville, Ohio.

"FIVE FEET OF BOOKS."

Reading is admittedly the nurse of culture. It is not how much one reads, but the kind and quality of the reading that counts. Thousands of books are born and but few of them live. Many deserve to die and hundreds ought never to have been written. The law of life applies to books as it does to men and mice. Only the fittest survive. Occasionally some one book will live longer than necessity may suggest, but these are exceptions to the rule. Any book that is incapable of attracting the attention of critics can have but little individual merit. What to read in order to acquire what is regarded as a liberal education, has long been a puzzling question with many, and so far as we are aware, but one man has attempted the compilation of the list.

It is an interesting subject in any and all events. There are grave doubts if any two men could be found to agree upon such a list of books. Therefore we may be justified in entering into this discussion, in that Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard College, has prepared a list of books, which is now designated as "five feet of books," and deemed to be necessary, by him, to a liberal education. We can afford to ignore some of the books mentioned by him, as in the exercise of our private and personal judgment, we do not consider some of those named, essential to such an issue. In his list mention is made of such writers as Bacon, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Emerson, Shelley, Goethe, Cicero, Pliny, Plutarch, Dante, Darwin, Adam Smith, and he even includes Arabian nights. The most significant feature about his list is that he has omitted the bible altogether, and for his religious feature he assigns Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress as being all sufficient. This omission of the bible has created a storm of protest, but not all the preachers in the land could induce him to substitute the bible for any one of the books named, or even to add it to the list he has compiled.

That the bible should not be regarded essential to a course of study intended to produce what is called a liberal education, by so eminent an authority in such matters, is really and truly significant. It is a declaration of disregard for the bible. It also means that the writings of the world's scholars and thinkers are vastly superior to the bible for the purpose outlined. That so many preachers

should presume to utter a protest, must lead to the conclusion that they keenly realize the position to which the bible is being assigned, and that as a god-inspired book, it has been relegated to the rear of works of greater merit that have been written by man. While appreciating this act upon the part of Dr. Eliot, we are, none the less, of the opinion that the bible ought to be read by all persons of mature mind, else how would any one be justified in accepting or rejecting that which he has not examined. Believer or unbeliever alike must be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. But the bible should be read just as other books are read. The pruning knife of reason should be used in a liberal and literal sense.

Some of the preachers insist that a man's education is incomplete until he has read and studied the bible. This will depend upon what is meant by education. If it is an education for preaching merely, the bible may be necessary. If it is an education intended to fit a man for the practical affairs of life, then the bible can well be ignored, for thousands multiplied are getting an education without it.

Five feet of books, and not an inch of the bible.

FREETHOUGHT IN JAPAN.

The light of Freethought, and the humanizing influences of the principles it inculcates, have penetrated the clouds of orthodoxy that have heretofore hung like a pall over the Orient. In the land of the Mikado are at least two men, who may be classed with Paine and Ingersoll, and whom the historian of the future will chronicle as the real "saviors" of their country. One of these, D. Kotoku, has started a Freethought paper at Tokio, a copy of the initial number coming to our office through the courtesy of A. Johnson of San Francisco, better known as the "chaplain." The other is named Sakai, and he with eight other comrades, were in prison at the time of receiving the communications herein given, for having dared to express their Freethought opinions without having received permission from the Mikado's official censor.

The new Japanese paper is appropriately named. It is called "The Jijn-Shiso," which interpreted means "Freethought." It is published semi-monthly, at Tokio, and the copy now in our hands is dated May 25, 1909. American Freethinkers will, beyond doubt, express a fond hope for the success of the new publication, and while extending a heartfelt sympathy with the imprisoned heroes for the persecution they are being subjected to, wish for their final victory and a speedy release. And yet, it has ever been thus. World reformers have ever been vilified and persecuted. It is the same in all countries, and Japan offers no exception to the rule. Messrs. Kotoku and Sakai are not personally unknown in America. They spent a number of years on the Pacific coast, and being of broad and liberal mind, deep and earnest thinkers, they readily imbibed and

assimilated the most progressive thought of the day, and, feeling it to be their duty to carry the religious and political truths to their countrymen, they returned to Japan and entered upon a course of propaganda which very speedily attracted the attention of the government. As a cause prospers through persecution so will Freethought triumph even in Japan. The public mind is more or less affected by the agitation that opposition naturally creates, and on the other hand, the friends of the cause are brought closer together for mutual support and defense. Although non-Christian, Japan is among the religious nations of earth, and every religion, having the power of the secular arm at its command, has resorted to a persecution of those who dare oppose it. The advocates of Freethought, ever conscious of his intellectual strength, falter not in the path of duty though all hell's hyenas bark and howl in his wake.

In this new Japanese movement we find an earnest and capable advocacy of Freethought as against all forms of religious superstition. The Buddhist superstition, as well as the Christian, find here a foe that must be reckoned with. This is really the first gun fired in a campaign for intellectual liberty and the means of teaching the millions in Japan, their true relations to their fellow-man, and to Nature. It is our duty to encourage the movement and as a means to this end we suggest that all *Blade* readers who can, write a friendly letter of comradeship and cheer to D. Kotoku, 903 Sendagaya, Tokio, Japan.

As an incentive to such a proceeding we here publish the letter written by this sterling Japanese patriot, and sent by him, to Friend Johnson. It reads:

Tokio, May 25.

Dear Friend and Comrade:

How are you? How are your eyes? Forgive me my negligence in writing you. Having been moving from place to place owing to barbarous persecution, I could not get time to write to you.

I translated and printed Kropotkin's "Conquest of Bread" two months ago, and soon its sales were prohibited. Kropotkin's "Law of Authority" also were translated and secretly printed. The officials are vehemently researching its translator and printer.

I newly started a Freethought paper, first number of which I enclose here. I ask you that if you have time and if you have time and health, you will write an article for my paper.

Comrade Sakai and other eight comrades are still in prison. My health is recovering by and by. In a hurry,

Yours fraternally,

D. KOTOKU.

903 Sendagaya, Tokio.

The *Blade* was requested to forward the above letter to Mrs. Josephine K. Henry, but we deemed it of sufficient interest to print, and Mrs. Henry will be able to read it in these columns.

In the new Freethought paper is one column printed in English which we reproduce that our readers may see and understand just how this new advocacy has been received by the Japanese government. At the same time it will suggest the necessity for such assistance as we are able to give that they may keep up the fight. Men confined in prison, no matter the cause, cannot do much, and friends outside must be relied upon to render all the help they can. One thing is sure, they must need money to wage such a war, and a few dollars will go a long way in Japan. Should any friend feel like sending a contribution to aid in the defense of the imprisoned men and the propagation of their work, the *Blade* will gladly forward the same, or it may be sent direct. The article, which is really an initial editorial, reads as follows:

THE JIYN-SHISO.

The "Jiyn-Shiso" is issued by some Japanese Free-thinkers and Free-Communists.

The word "Jiyn-Shiso" literally means "Free-thought," but we intend to use this word as the title of our paper, not only for the free-thought in religious belief, but for broader sense. Indeed Japanese society at present is not so deeply poisoned by the evils of Christianity as the western nations are. On the other hand, we are pressingly urged by our daily life to think that it is most important work for us to propagate the free-thought against the false doctrine in political, economical, sexual and all other problems. So we have decided the publication of this journal as an organ of our cause.

The Japanese Government, however, always endeavors to suppress any advanced thought, and especially the present Cabinet, which is known as most reactionary one, is using its all powers for the persecutions. Every group was dissolved, any meeting is not allowed, and all revolutionary publications also are suppressed. Thus, in Japan, there is no socialist paper existed but a mild Marxian monthly.

Under such circumstances, we can not know how long our paper will be allowed to exist here. At any rate, we will do earnestly our duties as long as we can.

EDITORIAL POTPOURRI.

Another heresy trial seems imminent for an Episcopal preacher, and if his congregation are able to sufficiently recover from their astonishment and surprise long enough to do a little thinking, Dr. Crapsey will soon have excellent company. It is reported that Rev. Dr. Cheeseman, a recently installed pastor of the Episcopal Church at Mt. Carmel, Ill., has completely annihilated the divine origin, divine inspiration, and infallibility of the bible. He is quoted as saying: "Who told you that the bible is of any more authority than what Dickens, or Tennyson, or

Wordsworth wrote: "I do not know where you get the idea. This thing of making a fetish of the bible and bowing down to it is one of the most ridiculous ideas ever heard of. The bible is no more infallible than the book you are going to write." We could not have said more on such a subject. Dr. Cheesman is to be heartily commended for his superb courage in giving public utterance to such a truth. His liberality and courage may cost him his pulpit, but from the little knowledge we have concerning him, we are inclined to the belief that he will shed no tears, experience no regret, should the church authorities send him to the ranks of heretics.

The demand for young men in the orthodox Christian ministry, and the extreme paucity of the supply, have led the Presbyterian authorities in New York City to license, us preachers, three young men, who, in answer to questions put to them, made heretical replies, and according to church rule, should have been denied the right to preach. The most cardinal doctrines of the Presbyterian church were denied by them, and their acceptance proves that things are moving in the right direction.

Bravo Prof. Foster! The Baptist Conference in Chicago gave him the bonnie, but they cannot change his line of thought nor cause him to retreat. He is now quoted by the Record-Herald, Chicago, as saying:

"The time has come when freedom of thought must be permitted. The ministers will have to change their attitude. They cannot control the universities and must yield these points. You may be sure that I am not going to quit.

"I will not resign and I will not change my teachings to suit the Baptist ministers. I will go on teaching the truth. I have but little to do with the Baptist church organization and confine my work to the classes I have.

"It just happens that the subject I teach encounters the doctrines of the ministers more than astronomy, biology or sociology. But I will not change. It is time the ministers changed their views."

THE UNFOLDMENT OF TRUTH.

The old saying that "Rome was not built in a day" may be taken as suggesting the slow and laborious processes of improvement. But if the idea is at all applicable to the material changes wrought by the hand of man, such as

the erection of large cities, inventing and building machines, it is indeed of far greater application to the slow but certain processes of change and physical growth as wrought by Nature without man's assistance. All truth is of slow unfoldment. Especially do we perceive this if the truth is antagonistic to the cherished notions and beliefs of the majority. In many cases the truth is first met with denial and only in the great aerie of time does it undergo the transitory stages from rejection to acceptance.

In a previous issue we made a rather long comment upon a series of articles by Harold Bolee, published in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, wherein a large number of quotations were given from the leading educators of America, defining their attitude towards the orthodox pretensions of present-day Christianity. We are pleased to notice that in the August number of the same magazine, the same writer appears with an extended article upon "Christianity in the Cradle" and once again the expressed opinions of university teachers and professors find elaboration. At this writing we have not time to enter upon a full and complete discussion of the issues here presented and this will be reserved for our next issue.

The most interesting phase of Mr. Bolee's articles is the direction whither they are leading. Their certain tendency must be toward the overthrow of ultra-orthodox beliefs, for in an editorial note explanatory of the articles, the editor of the *Cosmopolitan* intimates that they have shown that "our great universities repudiate the dogma and orthodoxy of the established church" and he predicts that it will ultimately result in the proclamation of "a new religion divested of biblical and church creed." It is encouraging to those who have been prosecuting a relentless war against all forms of orthodox superstition, for many years, without hope or possibility of remunerative considerations, to find in the present age such a task being undertaken by men of profound learning and ability who have not heretofore been identified therewith. These men, as a result of critical study and investigation, have reached the conclusion that the leading educational institutions and the leading educators of the country are now convinced that the religious thought inculcated by the church and its advocates are not only far in the rear of social needs and social truth, but that they have ever been an obstacle to human advancement and an obscuring pall to physical truth.

Thus then, all truth, no matter its complexion, is of slow unfoldment, but once unfolded, it remains in open view for all time. A truth is, and must be, always a truth. Having submitted church claims and church dogma, to the severe test of a high scholasticism, it is but natural that all so-called sacred institutions shall be subjected to the most searching scientific tests.

We purpose to follow this discussion in greater detail, and in the meantime we would advise our readers to a careful perusal of the article in question.

MAN'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY:

(Continued from Page 7.)

the courts are not equivalent to right, and only serve to afford the lawyers an opportunity to receive higher wages for their labor than any person engaged in a useful avocation. In fact the so-called administration of justice is nothing but a gigantic humbug which owes its existence to the moral cowardice of the people. Every body is afraid of it but as long as it only hits his neighbor, nobody cares. The ignorance of the people in regard to the true relations between natural and human laws makes them moral cowards. Notwithstanding that no law is taught in school and the majority of the people grow up and become good and useful members of society without the least knowledge of the statutes, the common error is prevailing that laws were necessary to maintain the social order, while it is a fact that only a small minority requires a check for their brutal, animal instincts, incompatible with a peaceable state of human existence. This erroneous conception of human nature causes mutual distrust and consequently personal selfishness which prevents the generation of public spirit, the feeling of relationship and mutual dependence, necessary for cooperation in behalf of the general welfare. In the struggle of existence this error becomes the means by which some individuals secure an unproportional share of the nation's wealth to the detriment of those who are com-

elled through the law to pay some one else ten times more for his labor than they receive for their own.

Let us examine now how the laws fulfill their functions, which we found consist in dealing with those who disregard the rights of their fellow men.

As the first postulate for the existence of society we found security of life. The law does not and can not protect life, it can only deal with the accomplished fact of murder and by its action exert an influence upon the moral impulse from which every deed springs, it can encourage crime by leniency, or discourage it by swift retribution. Although it is true enough that no law in the world could abolish crime altogether, it is nevertheless a fact that consciousness of immunity from severe and prompt punishment will turn the scale in favor of crime in the mind of a person whose ferocious instincts are in conflict with his better knowledge. It does not require elaborate statistics to prove this, we have the best illustration in the wonderful efficiency of the lynch law to restore public order and safety of life and property, where the courts failed completely. I mentioned already my own experience in a mining camp beyond the reach of the law and refer for further information on this subject to an article in the August number (1892) of Harpers Monthly Magazine, by John W. Clampitt, "the Vigilantes of California, Idaho and Montana."

(To be continued.)

RELIGIOUS EQUATIONS.

(By Norman Murray.)

In your editorial June 6th you state that "All the Christian nations gave a secret sympathy and a silent support to Russia." Now the fact of the matter is that Britain was an ally of Japan and had no sympathy whatever with Russia, secret or otherwise. In the Crimean War both Britain and France were both in alliance with Turkey against Russia. The trouble with Christianity and much of what is now called freethought is that they don't mean anything in particular. Some people who call themselves Christians are a great deal better people than some people who call themselves freethinkers and some people who call themselves freethinkers are better than some people who call themselves Christians. So these shibboleths don't mean much to the practical man of the world. To some freethinkers and Christians freethought means atheism and free love. If a man is pointed out to me as a Quaker I expect to meet a man of a particular fine type of character from my point of view. To many the motto of a freethinker is supposed to be: "No God, no soul, no hereafter and man is the child of a monkey." I was a freethinker when I was engaged in church work because I

never had any apologies to make to any one for my opinions and I never asked any one to apologize to me for his. I am a pagan because I don't see why I should go to the Jews directly or indirectly for religion. Most of the unredeemed people have just as little or as much use for Christianity as they have for what is commonly called freethought. The pagan gods had some definite meaning attached to them. Jupiter or Zeus in Greece or Rome was the head god as Thor was in Scandinavia. Venus was the goddess of love, Baelus the god of the drunkard and Nemesis was the goddess who pursued evil doers. The Jews, Mahometans and Christians are all supposed to worship the same God. This god is so extraordinary that no one knows what he stands for. He is the god of love and the god of hate and revenge and forgiveness. The great difference between some people who call themselves freethinkers and some people who call themselves Christians claim their aim to be to make mankind into one family on earth and get some of them to heaven when they die and send the bad people to hell. The freethinkers don't appear to have any definite programme. I maintain that an atheist and a philosopher is never under the one hat. Atheism is a fat like stamp collecting. We can form a very good idea of the

character of a people when we discover their ideas about god.

As there has never been such a people yet a pure atheistic community would be a very good sociological study. For myself I don't think I would like to live in such a community. I find a good deal of amusement in all the different Christian denominations. Since I now belong to all the churches—that is to the outside of them—I find myself in an entirely new world. I am not an evolutionist and have no great faith in humanity. I like a good dog a great deal better than a bad man. If the number of divorcees increase in the United States with the increase of atheism it is a sure sign that atheism is no good.

Montreal, Canada.

THE ROAD TO FREETHOUGHT.

(By Andrew Root.)

At the age of 16 years I had occasion to "batch" one winter with a friend, on a farm. One morning, after the chores were done and breakfast over, my friend said:

"Well Andy! I am going to town, when you get the housework done just make yourself at home—help yourself to the books if you like to read."

Glad for that privilege, I hurried through with my work and going to the bookease

I selected a small book, took a seat and began to read at random through its pages. I was soon delighted and amazed at the beauty, eloquence, originality and feeling of its contents. I was charmed. I stopped short and asked myself, half aloud—Who can be the author? Then turning to the title page, I read—"Wit, Wisdom and Eloquence," by Col. Robt. G. Ingersoll.

That book closed like a steel-trap and found its place on the bookshelf, never again to be read by me. "It is so nice that I am afraid I will like it," was the way my young orthodox brain "reasoned." I had heard Ingersoll abused and reviled from every pulpit and had, naturally, associated his name with the "lowest imps of darkness."

For years I tried to forget his beautiful words, regarding them as a snare of the "evil one" to catch the unwary souls of men. Nine years later I heard a prominent Methodist preacher give Ingersoll a fearful word flogging, but he was frank or subtle enough to say that Ingersoll was a "learned man," "used good language—eloquent language," "and I regret to say," said he, "that the most respectable, intelligent and prominent people in the land go to hear him. The man is honest but mistaken."

A month later I heard another "divine." He said that Ingersoll was an "ignorant, foul-mouthed fool, vulgar and obscene in his speech," and that "nobody but thieves, cut-throats, drunkards, gamblers and women off the streets went to hear him." They contradicted each other on every point. It was obvious to me that one of the "divines" was wilfully lying and that the only way for me to learn the truth about Ingersoll was to read his books myself, which I hastened to do. I now wish his books were read in every home. They would be an inspiration and spur to every heart. I tell this little experience to show how ignorance and prejudice will keep well meaning people from reading some of the world's best literature.

Kansas City, Mo.

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This is the seventh edition. It was originally published at two shillings and six pence, after it appeared in serial form in "The Clarion," under the title of "Bible and Science." A cheaper edition has just been issued of which I imported a lot, and I will mail one to any address, postpaid, for 15 cents.

NORMAN MURRAY,
246 St. James St. Montreal, Canada.

The Blade's Correspondence

Favors Our Plan to Organize.

BIRTHRIGHT, TEXAS.—I certainly approve of your plan for a national Freethought organization on a truly liberal plan. Such an organization would meet with my hearty approval and support so far as I am financially able, and know your plan also meets the approval of at least four Freethought friends of mine in this state. By way of suggestion I would mention that the Socialist party and Mormon church are two of the most thoroughly organized and equipped organizations in America and are both strictly self-supporting financially. Even should we emulate the example of Peter the Great, who learned important lessons from his worst enemies, we would be doing a good work for both the present and future generations. This is a day of mammoth organizations, and huge undertakings. In the words of the immortal Freethinker, Patrick Henry: "Shall we lie supinely on our backs hugging the delusive phantom of hope until our enemies have bound us hand and foot?" What can we hope to gain without concerted effort on our part? History fails to record an instance of any people in any age or clime, who have gained any concessions from the ruling classes, without first asserting and then vigorously and aggressively contending for and maintaining said rights. And we are no exception to this invariable law of nature. By all means let us have a colossal National Freethought organization on the most liberal plan possible consistent with its objects, with our brainiest and most influential Freethinkers at its head.—J. M. REED.

Organize on Broad Platform.

TULAROSA, TEXAS.—I have waited patiently to see some plan of organization discussed but as Freethinkers do not seem to care enough about it to state their preference I will state mine.

I think that we should organize a national Freethought association and I prefer that it should be on the lines of a secret order or society but in whatever form it is organized it should be so constituted that it could act as a trustee to receive donations and gifts for propaganda work and to distribute the same according to the donors expressed desires, and it, through

its various local branches should have power to assume the directions as to funeral of its members.

The dues should be small to induce all liberals to join and as an additional incentive it might be arranged to pay benefits to the surviving member of the family, or not, as a council should decide as these are mere suggestions as to matters of detail. But above all the platform should be broad enough to permit all liberals, whether Atheist, Infidel, Materialist, or Agnostic, or any person by whatsoever name designated, so long as they deny any of the preposterous claims of the church and are searching after truth to become members, but all should be compelled to acknowledge nature's laws as paramount and to reject any teaching that conflicts with nature's laws as we see them exemplified.—WM. J. HOWERTON.

By All Means Organize.

BENNINGTON, KAS.—By all means let the prominent and leading Freethinkers of the U. S. meet in convention and devise a scheme or plan for the union of all radical, thinking, intellectual men and women into one grand, harmonious and vigorous organization having for its object the spread of Freethought. Propaganda—Why should they not thus present a solid phalanx to the fanatical sky pilots and their credulous hosts who meet in their great State Sunday-school conventions and loudly proclaim their superior goodness because foolish, they have without let or hindrance succeeded in poisoning the minds of helpless children and unthinking and credulous people until in their egotistic bigotry they boast that one fourth of the people of the great State of Kansas attend the Sunday-school. What for? Should not these things arouse the Liberals to action as nothing else could do?

Find enclosed \$1.00 to apply on my subscription. I will try hard to send you another dollar inside of six months. The season is late here and financial conditions are dull. And the people are, oh, so indifferent, are in fact intellectually asleep.—HENRY C. ROBERTS.

Joins Blade Family.

KANSAS CITY, MO.—Inclosed find one dollar for six months subscription for Blue Grass Blade and five copies beginning with Vol. 18, Number 2, which will start the six months term with No. 7. From your letter of the 11th inst I expected to receive the back numbers last week but they did not reach me, so hope to get them soon.—L. H. REECE.

Is Now a Subscriber.

PICKENS, W. VA.—Please send me a copy of the Blade and if it suits me I will subscribe for it as I would like to take a freethought paper. Very truly yours.—J. A. HELDRETH.

Bravos for the Blade.

TIMBO, ARK.—Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! Your old time spirit is not dead, I want to hold up my hand to signify my acquiescence to your issue of June 6. Bliss or Blisters—Friendly Criticism About Government—Soul thoughts on the Blade's Founder—the other many fine articles, nay and the splendid editorials, all so much of merit. I wish a few kindred spirits would write to me in the far awny Ozarks.—ADA L. DANIELS.

Subscribes for Hausman's Book.

DECATUR, ILL.—Find inclosed two dollars as advance subscription for the book, "Man's Origin and Destiny," by Dr. A. Hansman, when from the press. Judging from the first chapters as published serial in the Blade the book should have a large subscription and sale—MRS. A. B. BARTEAU.

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KANSAS CITY, MO.—I have been getting the Blade from a local dealer who has failed to deliver of late. My last copy is Volume XVIII, Number 1. I was interested especially in "Man's Origin and Destiny." Can you and will you mail me the copies of the Blade continuing the remaining chapters of the work? If so I will appreciate it very much and will remit as per statement for same. Hoping to hear from you soon I am yours for the cause.—L. H. REECE.



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